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UNCLAS TAIPEI 004743

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - ERIC  
BARBORIAK  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: The major Chinese-language Taiwan dailies gave significant reporting and editorial coverage on November 29 to the campaigns and mud-slinging of Taiwan's 3-in-1 elections, which will be held December 3. Taiwan Think Tank Director for Foreign Policy Studies Lai I-chung commented on U.S.-China-Taiwan relations in an opinion piece in the centrist "China Times." According to Lai, the United States' policy toward the Asia-Pacific region is transforming; it is changing from the 'conengagement' strategy, which sees China as the main target, toward a 'tuning strategy' that is aimed at adjusting America's role in the Asia-Pacific region. End summary.

"United States' Asia-Pacific Policy Under Adjustment"

Lai I-chung, Taiwan Think Tank Director for Foreign Policy Studies, commented in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (11/29):

"The United States' policy toward the Asia-Pacific area is under transformation! Such a development is related to the rise of China, normalization of Japan, strategic about-face of South Korea, emergence of India, and the fact that the United States' composite national strength is incapable of sustaining its 'unilateral' requests. Washington's entire Asia-Pacific policy has started to move from the 'conengagement' strategy which sees China as the main target toward a 'tuning strategy' that is aimed at adjusting its [America's] role in the Asia-Pacific region. .

"First, regarding its China policy, Washington is rid of its prior polarized 'containment vs. engagement' view. The speech by the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State at Asia Society in late September showed that Washington hopes that China will become a 'stakeholder' that shares joint interests with the United States. This change of perception [by Washington] is related to its realization of China's powerful strength and the deep co-dependence between the two nations. As a result, the 'containment' [policy] to counter China's rise and the 'engagement' [policy] that attempts to change China are neither viable. That is why Washington sought to persuade China to see which development direction would meet the common interests of both nations and [affirm to China] that it has no intention to [play a part] in China's 'peaceful evolution.' In the meantime, Washington has been re-organizing its cooperative relationships in the Asia-Pacific region so that it can be ready in the event China confronts the United States; Washington also sought to restore its influence in Asia, some of which has been nibbled away by China.

"[Such a trend] explains why U.S. President George W. Bush, in his speech [delivered in Kyoto], hailed Taiwan's democracy and 'encouraged' China to move toward democracy instead of 'blaming' it for not being democratic. Likewise, it also explains why the United States is seeking to enhance security and cooperative relations with major Asian nations, the United States' old allies in the region, and the countries neighboring China all at the same time. .

"Judging from this perspective, unless China intends to go right ahead and challenge the United States' domain of influence in the Taiwan Strait, chances are slim for the United States and China to 'co-manage' Taiwan. But if pro-China or pro-U.S. forces arise inside Taiwan., 'co-management' will definitely occur under the request of strategic adjustment by the United States and China."

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